

A wide-angle photograph of the interior of the Florida House of Representatives chamber. The room is semi-circular with tiered seating for members, facing a central dais where the speaker's chair is located. The walls are lined with framed portraits of past representatives. The ceiling is a large, white, geometric dome.

Florida

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2005

INTERIM PROJECTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Committee on Agriculture	4
Equine Industry.....	4
Marketing of Florida Agricultural Products.....	4
Committee on Appropriations	4
Fee Project.....	4
Economic Development.....	4
Review of Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation.....	4
Committee on Business Regulation	5
Monitoring Projects.....	5
Slot Machine Petition Drive.....	5
Article X, Section 20 – Smoking in Enclosed Indoor Workplaces.....	5
Telephone Rate Case.....	5
Committee on Commerce	6
Financial Protection for Elderly Persons-A Joint Project with the Committee on Judiciary.....	6
Review of Economic Development Incentives for Counties that Do Not Qualify for Rural Status or Enterprise Zone Status.....	6
Review of the Rental Car Surcharge.....	6
Committee on Education	6
Education Fact Sheets.....	6
Higher Education Funding Policies.....	6
Middle Grades Education.....	6
Board of Governors Implementation.....	6
Committee on Finance and Tax	7
Florida Tax Handbook.....	7
Impact Conferences.....	7
Committee on Future of Florida’s Families	7
Child Abuse Death Review Committees.....	7
DOEA Contracting System.....	7
Committee on Health Care	8
Restructuring of Florida’s Medicaid System.....	8
Subscriber Assistance Program.....	8
Background Information on Health Profession Licensure Issues.....	8
Committee on Insurance	9
Workers Compensation Reforms/Impact on the Availability And Affordability of Insurance Coverage.....	9
Implementation of Health Flex Pilot Programs.....	9
Mold.....	9
Committee on Judiciary	10
Child Support Guidelines.....	10
Protecting assets of the Elderly.....	10
Intestate Succession.....	10
Judicial Rulemaking.....	10
Monitor implementation of Art. V, Revision 7, legislation.....	10

Committee on Local Government & Veterans' Affairs	10
Regional Planning Council Review.....	10
Committee Publications.....	10
Committee on Natural Resources	11
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.....	11
Committee on Public Safety & Crime Prevention	11
Florida Standard Jury Instructions in Criminal Cases.....	11
Seaport Security Compliance and Costs.....	11
Committee on State Administration	11
Open Government Sunset Reviews.....	11
Committee on Transportation	12
Younger Drivers & Passenger Restrictions.....	12
Transportation Project Materials and Products Approval Process.....	12

Committee on Agriculture

- 1. Equine industry:** A study of the economic impact of Florida's equine (horse) industry (owning, breeding, training) and what might be done, statutorily, to encourage the industry's growth and expansion.
- 2. Marketing of Florida agricultural products:** A review of laws, rules, and practices relating to licensing, bonding, inspection and certification of agricultural products.

Committee on Appropriations

- 1. Fee Project:** Staff will develop a comprehensive database on statutorily-imposed fees based on independent research and survey results received from state agencies. This information will then be analyzed to craft options and recommendations for a proposed fee policy to be used by leadership for the future imposition and review of statutorily-imposed fees.
- 2. Economic Development:** Staff will review certain economic development programs currently scheduled to sunset in order to develop fiscal policy options regarding the interaction between the programs that are driven through the appropriations process and those that are tax-based. Currently, some multi-year agreements are authorized through the annual General Appropriations Act, while others that are very similar in nature are driven through tax-related breaks and credits.
- 3. Review of Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation:** Staff will report on the activities of the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation created under the Article V legislation, particularly with respect to implementation of budgetary responsibilities, compliance with statutory responsibilities, and the impact on projected state revenues. Staff also will identify issues associated with the continued involvement of the Corporation in the clerk budgeting process and examine alternative approaches, including the repeal of the Corporation and legislative review and approval of clerk budgets.

Committee on Business Regulation

Monitoring Projects

1. Slot Machine Petition Drive: An organization known as “Floridians for a Level Playing Field” has proposed and is circulating a petition for a constitutional amendment to be placed on the ballot for the next general election to allow county voters to approve or disapprove the operation of slot machines at existing pari-mutuel facilities in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. If passed in the general election and then passed by county-wide referendums, staff will research various regulatory schemes in other states where slots are authorized at pari-mutuel facilities and provide those options in a decision-making format to committee members so they can develop implementing legislation or use the format when considering a member sponsored bill.

2. Article X, Section 20 – Smoking in Enclosed Indoor Workplaces: Staff will continue to track implementation of Article X, Section 20 of the Florida Constitution prohibiting smoking in enclosed indoor workplaces. Issues for consideration would include but not be limited to implementation of rules by the Department of Health and the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, problems with enforcing the ban in the workplace, enforcing the conditions for qualifying as a Stand-alone Bar and identifying new or emerging issues or problems with implementation.

3. Telephone Rate Case: Staff will monitor legal proceedings before the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Florida Supreme Court relating the PSC’s approval of petitions authorizing the major incumbent local telephone companies to reduce intrastate long distance access fees and raise the price of basic telephone service.

Committee on Commerce

1. Financial Protection for Elderly Persons -- A Joint Project with the Committee on Judiciary: Staff will study whether it would be advisable to establish standards for organizations to adopt and follow that might protect elderly persons from fraud and deceit and from incidents of misuse of their personal and financial information. Staff will study whether it would be advisable for commercial organizations to maintain and publicize a business policy protective of the interests of the elderly persons, which would enable elderly persons to easily identify those commercial organizations that will best assist them in protecting their own privacy interests.

2. Review of Economic Development Incentives for Counties that Do Not Qualify for Rural Status or Enterprise Zone Status: Staff will study five counties (Bay, Monroe, Citrus, Charlotte, and Clay) that currently do not qualify as rural counties and do not qualify for enterprise zones. Staff will study whether altering a current incentive program or creating a new one to help these “in between” counties would be good policy.

3. Review of the Rental Car Surcharge: Staff will investigate how the monies from the rental car surcharge have been used over the last 3 years. Staff will use the information to advise the House on consideration of whether the State should change the current distributions of monies from the surcharge.

Committee on Education

1. Education Fact Sheets: Review and update all education fact sheets to prepare new Education Fact Sheet book for 2005 House members.

2. Higher Education Funding Policies: Continue review of higher education funding policies to identify and analyze a spectrum of promising initiatives.

3. Middle Grades Education: Research difficulties inherent in middle grades education. Identify and analyze promising reforms.

4. Board of Governors Implementation: Identify statutory changes needed to fully implement Article IX, section 7 of the Florida Constitution.

To submit comments on the statutes under review please click on the following link:
<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/SUSgovernancereview.aspx>

Committee on Finance and Tax

1. Florida Tax Handbook: Staff will take the lead in identifying changes that are needed to the Florida Tax Handbook and will participate with staff of the Senate, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Department of Revenue to prepare an updated handbook.

2. Impact Conferences: As part of the revenue estimating conference process set out in Chapter 216, the revenue estimating conference produces official estimates of impacts of proposed legislation affecting state and local revenues. Working in conjunction with the other principals and participants in the conference process, staff will propose new processes that will make the results of the impact conferences better understood.

Committee on Future of Florida's Families

1. Child Abuse Death Review Committees: Review the functioning of the Child Abuse Death Review Committees, the use of their recommendations by Department of Children and Families in improving its investigative activities, and the relationship between the Child Abuse Death Review Committees and DCF's internal reviews of deaths of children in the custody of the department. Staff will also examine the effect of the repeal (through failure to save by reenactment) of the public records exemption for certain information and meetings held by the Committees.

2. DOEA Contracting System: Since its establishment, the Department of Elder Affairs has contracted with Area Agencies on Aging to provide local management and administration of its programs. This project will examine DOEA's monitoring of Area Agencies, compliance by Area Agencies with state statute and rules, an evaluation of Area Agency management of provider service contracts, and recommendations as to the most efficient management model for the state's elder service delivery system.

Committee on Health Care

1. Restructuring of Florida's Medicaid System: Committee staff will examine Medicaid reform proposals at the national and state level to provide basic policy options for consideration by the Legislature to restructure Florida's \$14 billion Medicaid program.

2. Subscriber Assistance Program: Consumers who have an unsatisfactory resolution of a grievance with a managed care entity are allowed to file a grievance with the Subscriber Assistance Program. Numerous complaints have been received regarding the criteria used by the Agency for Health Care Administration in determining which cases to be heard as well as the amount of resources utilized for cases heard outside of the established criteria. Committee staff will examine the criteria for consideration of a grievance to determine whether appropriate cases are being heard and determine the amount of resources utilized for consideration of cases.

3. Background Information on Health Profession Licensure Issues: Committee staff will prepare a white paper for legislators to use in responding to legislative proposals to change licensure requirements for specific health care professions in order to accommodate changes in technology and professional specialization, protect a profession from competition, and establish licensure of a new profession.

Committee on Insurance

1. Workers Compensation Reforms/Impact on the Availability and Affordability of Insurance Coverage:

In 2003, the Legislature passed comprehensive reforms to the workers' compensation law in order to make workers' compensation insurance more affordable and accessible. In the 2004 Legislative Session, legislation was passed relating to the Workers' Compensation Joint Underwriting Association and to the workers' compensation rating criteria, to provide alternatives for employers to obtain affordable workers' compensation insurance. Staff will study the impact of the 2004 legislation on workers' compensation rates and availability of workers' compensation insurance at affordable premiums for employers.

2. Implementation of Health Flex Pilot Programs: In 2004, the Legislature passed reforms to make health insurance more available and affordable. One aspect of the legislation expanded the Health Flex Pilot Program statewide. Health Flex allows entities to offer insurance coverage without being subject to certain regulations or mandated benefit requirements. The pilots currently in place have experienced limited success. Staff will monitor the further implementation and evaluation of the program.

3. Mold: Staff will review and summarize the testimony of the three mold hearings that were conducted in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, and Miami, and will conduct further research on other states' policies on mold. Staff will analyze and gather current information on the most recent toxicology reports regarding "toxic mold," and will formulate options that the State may want to pursue regarding homeowners' insurance and mold.

Committee on Judiciary

- 1. Child Support Guidelines:** Staff will provide legal counsel and analysis to staff of Future of Florida's Families Committee who are reviewing recommendations and drafting implementing legislation relating to recommended changes in child support guidelines.
- 2. Protecting assets of the Elderly:** Staff will participate in review of available means of protecting assets of elderly Floridians, working in cooperation with staff of Commerce Committee. Work will involve reviewing trust and probate laws, practices and marketing of financial institutions.
- 3. Intestate Succession:** Staff will conduct survey other states to determine intestate succession rules respecting the most distant degree of relatives entitled to inherit intestate estates in default of near kin. Staff will review suggestions to make provision for families of holocaust victims whose inheritances were cut off by genocide.
- 4. Judicial Rulemaking:** Staff will survey Court Rules of Procedure to identify rules that affect substantive rights. Recommendations for revision and/or repeal will be drafted.
- 5. Monitor implementation of Art. V, Revision 7, legislation:** Staff will identify "glitch" matters for inclusion in future legislation, in cooperation with staff of Appropriations Committee. Staff will also assist in identifying audit, reporting and technology requirements pursuant to such legislation.

Committee on Local Government & Veterans' Affairs

- 1. Regional Planning Council Review:** Review and evaluate the roles, activities, and resources of the eleven Regional Planning Councils. This review will also consider interaction and coordination with local governments and the Department of Community Affairs.
- 2. Committee Publications:** Staff will complete the annual update of the local bill policy and local government formation manuals.

Committee on Natural Resources

1. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: The statutory responsibilities of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission over wildlife and freshwater and marine fisheries are currently found in Chapters 370 and 372. This interim project is to create a new chapter of the Florida Statutes combining Chapters 370 and 372 to bring these statutory responsibilities into a single unified chapter that clearly and consistently addresses these responsibilities and which is more "user-friendly."

Committee on Public Safety & Crime Prevention

1. Florida Standard Jury Instructions in Criminal Cases: Staff will follow-up on last year's interim project to ensure conformity of standard instructions with current statutory definitions and factual elements found in criminal offenses, in light of case law. Staff will prepare any needed corrective legislation and any needed recommendations for possible communication to Bar Committees.

2. Seaport Security Compliance and Costs: Staff will participate in legislative review directed by SB 1820 (2004). Staff will work in cooperation with Randy Havlicak and House Appropriations staff.

Committee on State Administration

1. Open Government Sunset Reviews: The Division of Statutory Revision has certified eight public records and public meetings exemptions for repeal pursuant to the Open Government Sunset Review Act of 1995. The exemptions range from confidentiality of business records to confidentiality of domestic violence records. Staff will examine the exemptions in order to provide members with background information for their use in determining whether the exemptions should be reenacted, expanded, narrowed, or repealed.

Committee on Transportation

1. Younger Drivers & Passenger Restrictions: During the 2004 Legislative Session a number of proposals were considered which would have restricted the number of passengers in a vehicle with a driver under a certain age. Staff will review driver licensing restrictions in other states and determine whether these restrictions could be effectively incorporated in Florida's graduated driver licensing process.

2. Transportation Project Materials and Products Approval Process: Materials and product testing ensure that the materials used in construction projects meet required department specifications. In addition, Department of Transportation researchers investigate new and emerging technologies and innovative concepts to improve transportation facilities. The State Materials Office, located in Gainesville, sets policies and procedures for the materials program, which is carried out at the district level. Staff will review the materials and products approval program, with primary emphasis on use of new, cost-effective materials and products that have the potential of reducing accidents or enhancing safety.